

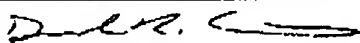
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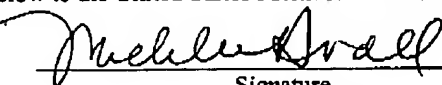
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TRANSMITTAL FORM <i>(to be used for all correspondence after initial filing)</i>		Application Number	10/670,773
		Filing Date	September 26, 2003
		First Named Inventor	Bunsho KURAMORI et al.
		Group Art Unit	2816
		Examiner Name	Terry Lee Englund
Total Number of Pages in This Submission		Attorney Docket Number	030712-13

ENCLOSURES (check all that apply)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fee Transmittal Form <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment / Reply <input type="checkbox"/> After Final <input type="checkbox"/> Affidavits/declaration(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Extension of Time Request <input type="checkbox"/> Express Abandonment Request <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Missing Parts/ Incomplete Application <input type="checkbox"/> Response to Missing Parts under 37 CFR 1.52 or 1.53	<input type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (for an Application) <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration and Power of Attorney <input type="checkbox"/> Licensing-related Papers <input type="checkbox"/> Petition <input type="checkbox"/> Petition to Convert to a Provisional Application <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney, Revocation Change of Correspondence Address <input type="checkbox"/> Terminal Disclaimer <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Refund <input type="checkbox"/> CD, Number of CD(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> After Allowance Communication to Group <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal Communication to Board of Appeals and Interferences <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appeal Communication to Group (Appeal Notice, Appeal Brief, Reply Brief) <input type="checkbox"/> Proprietary Information <input type="checkbox"/> Status Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Application Data Sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Corrected Filing Receipt with Enclosures <input type="checkbox"/> A self-addressed prepaid postcard for acknowledging receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Other Enclosure(s) (please identify below):
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Firm or Individual name	Donald R. Studebaker - Reg. No. 32,815 Nixon Peabody LLP 401 9 th Street, N.W. Suite 900 Washington, D.C. 20004-2128
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☐ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$500.00)

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Application Number	10/670,773
Filing Date	September 26, 2003
First Named Inventor	Bunsho KURAMORI et al.
Examiner Name	Terry Lee England
Art Unit	2813
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FEE CALCULATION

1. BASIC FILING FEE

Large Entity Fee Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
1001	300	2001	150	Utility filing fee	
1002	200	2002	100	Design filing fee	
1003	200	2003	100	Plant filing fee	
1004	300	2004	150	Reissue filing fee	
1005	200	2005	100	Provisional filing fee	

SUBTOTAL (1) (\$ 0)

2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES FOR UTILITY AND REISSUE

Total Claims	Extra Claims	Fee from below	Fee Paid
20** =	X		0
Independent Claims	-3** =	X	0
Multiple Dependent	X		0

Large Entity Fee Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description
1202	50	2202	25	Claims in excess of 20
1201	200	2201	100	Independent claims in excess of 3
1203	360	2203	180	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid
1204	200	2204	100	** Reissue independent claims over original patent
1205	50	2205	25	** Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) (\$ 0)

**or number previously paid, if greater; For Reissues, see above

FEE CALCULATION (continued)

3. ADDITIONAL FEES

Large Entity Fee Code	Large Entity Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee Description
1051	130	2051	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath
1052	50	2052	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet
1053	130	2053	65	Non-English specification
1812	2,520	1812	2,520	For filing a request for <i>ex parte</i> reexamination
1804	920*	1804	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action
1805	1,840*	1805	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action
1251	120	2251	60	Extension for reply within first month
1252	450	2252	225	Extension for reply within second month
1253	1,020	2253	510	Extension for reply within third month
1254	1,590	2254	795	Extension for reply within fourth month
1255	2,160	2255	1,080	Extension for reply within fifth month
1401	500	2401	250	Notice of Appeal
1402	500	2402	250	Filing a brief in support of an appeal
1403	1,000	2403	500	Request for oral hearing
1451	1,510	2451	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding
1452	500	2452	250	Petition to revive - unavoidable
1453	1,500	2453	750	Petition to revive - unintentional
1501	1,400	2501	700	Utility issue fee (or reissue)
1502	800	2502	400	Design issue fee
1503	1,100	2503	550	Plant issue fee
1460	130	2460	130	Petitions to the Commissioner
1807	50	2807	50	Processing fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a)
1806	180	2806	180	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt
8021	40	8021	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)
1809	790	2809	395	Filing a submission after final rejection (37 CFR 1.129(a))
1810	790	2810	395	For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR 1.129(b))
1801	790	2801	395	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)
1802	900	2802	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application

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August 29, 2006
Date

Michelle Duvall
Signature
Michelle Duvall
Typed or printed name

SUBMITTED BY

Name (Print/Type)	Donald R. Studebaker	Registration No. (Attorney/Agent)	32,815	Telephone	(202) 585-8000
Signature	<i>Donald R. Studebaker</i>	Date	August 29, 2006		

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Docket No.: 030712-13

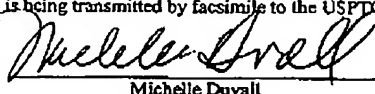
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In Re Patent Application of) Confirmation No.: 4336
Bunsho KURAMORI, et al.)
Application No. 10/670,773) Examiner: Terry L. Englund
Filed: September 26, 2003) Art Unit: 2816
For: SUBSTRATE VOLTAGE GENERATING) Date: August 29, 2006
CIRCUIT)

AUG 29 2006

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Michelle DuvallAPPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief – Patents
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Sir:

In accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §134 and 37 C.F.R. §41.37,
Appellants submits this Appeal Brief in support of the Notice of Appeal filed May 30, 2006.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

Oki Electric Industry Co., LTD. is the assignee and real party in interest.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are presently no appeals or interferences known to the Appellant, the Appellants' representative, or the assignee, which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

08/30/2006 MBINAS 00000021 192380 10670773

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

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For the purposes of this Appeal, claims 1-10 have been rejected. Thus, this Appeal is taken from the rejection of claims 1-10 as submitted in the Appendix herewith.

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IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments have been made to the claims subsequent to the final rejections stated in the Final Office Action of November 30, 2005.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

This Appeal is taken from claims 1-10, of which claims 1, 7 and 9 are independent. It should be noted that references to particular elements in the following discussion are for illustrative purposes to benefit the Examiner's understanding of the claimed invention and not intended to unduly limit the scope of Appellants' claimed invention.

With respect to claim 1, the present invention recited therein relates to a substrate voltage generating circuit comprising:

- a first power supply node supplied with a first potential level (i.e., VDD);

- a second power supply node supplied with a second potential level (i.e., VSS) lower than the first potential level;

- an output node (i.e., OUT.vbb) having a third potential level (i.e., VBB) lower than the second potential level;

- a level shift circuit (i.e., 101, 102) which is coupled between the first power supply node and the output node, which receives an input signal having the first and second potential levels, and which outputs an output signal having the first potential level and the third potential level; and

- a switch circuit (i.e., SW1, SW2) which connects the second power supply node to the output node in response to the output signal.

According to the specification, a first potential level is VDD, a second potential level is VSS, and a third potential level is VBB. VDD is disclosed in the specification as a high (H) potential level, while VSS is a low (L) potential level, and VBB, which is the generated substrate voltage, has a potential that is lower than the second potential level VSS. Support for the claimed features can be found at least in, e.g., Fig. 1 and its description in the specification.

With respect to dependent claim 2, which depends from claim 1, the claim further specifies that the level shift circuit comprises:

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a first transistor (i.e., P1 of Fig. 2) of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain;
a second transistor (i.e., P2 of Fig. 2) of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain coupled to the switch circuit;

a third transistor (i.e., N1 of Fig. 2) of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;

a fourth transistor (i.e., N2 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

a fifth transistor (i.e., N3 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thinner than the first thickness; and

a sixth transistor (i.e., N4 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

Support for the feature of claim 2 can be found in, e.g., Fig. 2 and its associate description in the first preferred embodiment in the specification. Support for the thickness of the gate oxide film of transistors N1 and N2 being thicker than those of transistors N3 and N4 can be found in the bridging paragraph between pages 10-11 of the specification.

With respect to dependent claim 3, which depends from claim 1, the claim further specifies that the level shift circuit comprises:

a first transistor (i.e., P31 of Fig. 3) of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain;
a second transistor (i.e., P32 of Fig. 3) of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain coupled to the switch circuit;

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a third transistor (i.e., N31 of Fig. 3) of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;

a fourth transistor (i.e., N32 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

a fifth transistor (i.e., N33 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thicker than the first thickness; and

a sixth transistor (i.e., N34 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

Support the features of claim 3 can be found in Fig. 3 and its description in the second preferred embodiment in the specification. Support for the feature wherein the thickness of the gate oxide film of the 3rd and 4th transistors is greater than the gate oxide film of the 5th and 6th transistors can be found in, e.g., page 18, lines 4-8.

With respect to dependent claim 4, which depends from claim 1, the claim further specifies that the switch circuit comprises:

a switching element (i.e., SW1, SW2 of Fig. 1) which has a control electrode receiving the output signal, a first electrode connected to the second power supply node, and a second electrode connected to the output node (i.e., OUT.vbb in Fig. 1); and

a capacitor (i.e., c1, c2 in Fig. 1) coupled between the first electrode and the control electrode.

With respect to dependent claim 5, which depends from claim 1, the claim further recites that the second potential level is 0 volt, as supported on page 5, lines 15-16, for example.

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With respect to dependent claim 6, which depends from claim 1, the claim further recites that third potential level is a negative voltage level, as recited in the amended page 6, lines 1-2 of the specification.

With respect to independent claim 7, the invention recited therein relates to a voltage level shifting circuit comprising:

- a first transistor (i.e., P1 of Fig. 2) of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving an input signal, a source connected to a first supply node supplied with a first potential level, and a drain;

- a second transistor (i.e., P2 of Fig. 3) of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first supply node, and a drain coupled to an output node (i.e., OUT.101 of Fig. 2);

- a third transistor (i.e., N1 of Fig. 2) of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;

- a fourth transistor (i.e., N2 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

- a fifth transistor (i.e., N3 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source connected to a second supply node supplied with a second potential level lower than the first potential level, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thinner than the first thickness; and

- a sixth transistor (i.e., N4 of Fig. 2) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source connected to the second supply node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

Support for claim 7 can be found at least in, e.g., in Fig. 2 and its respective description in the specification. Support for the thickness of the gate oxide film of transistors N1 and N2 being thicker than those of transistors N3 and N4 can be found in the bridging paragraph between pages 10-11 of the specification.

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With respect to dependent claim 8, which depends from claim 7, the claim further specifies the first potential level is a positive voltage level and the second potential level is a negative voltage level, as disclosed in original claim 8, which is part of the invention disclosure.

With respect to independent claim 9, the invention recited therein relates to a voltage level shifting circuit comprising:

a first transistor (i.e., P31 of Fig. 3) of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving an input signal, a source connected to a first supply node supplied with a first potential level, and a drain;

a second transistor (i.e., P32 of Fig. 3) of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first supply node, and a drain coupled to an output node;

a third transistor (i.e., N31 of Fig. 3) of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;

a fourth transistor (i.e., N32 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

a fifth transistor (i.e., N33 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source connected to a second supply node supplied with a second potential level lower than the first potential level, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thicker than the first thickness; and

a sixth transistor (i.e., N34 of Fig. 3) of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source connected to the second supply node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

Support for the claimed features can be found at least in Fig. 3 and its respective description in the specification. Support for the feature wherein the thickness of the gate

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oxide film of the 3rd and 4th transistors is greater than the gate oxide film of the 5th and 6th transistors can be found in, e.g., page 18, lines 4-8.

With respect to dependent claim 10, which depends from claim 9, the claim further specifies the first potential level is a positive voltage level and the second potential level is a negative voltage level, as disclosed in original claim 8, which is part of the invention disclosure.

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

A. Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 1st paragraph, based on the allegation that the specification is non-enabling for the claimed subject matter.

B. Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph, based on the allegation that the claims are indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which Appellant regards as the invention. Independent claims 7 and 9 are deemed as allowable, if rewritten or amended to satisfactorily overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in the Final Office Action of November 30, 2005.

C. The specification stands objected to as containing informalities.

There is no prior art rejection.

VII. ARGUMENTS

A. The Specification Fully Enables The Subject Matter Of Claims 1-6

In the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement, the Examiner asserts that the claims contain subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention because the specification, while being enabling for a level shift

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circuit, does not reasonably provide enablement for a substrate voltage generating circuit. The Examiner further asserts that, although the Appellants' own Fig. 1 is identified as a "substrate voltage generating circuit" that apparently generates substrate voltage VBB at its output terminal, the figure and disclosure do not clearly show/disclose how this is actually accomplished. Further, the Examiner asserts that the use of "substrate voltage generating circuit" in the preamble of claim 1 does not accurately identify the circuit being described in the claim. This rejection is traversed, as the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case with respect to enablement under Sections 112, first paragraph, for the following reasons:

The enablement requirement refers to the requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, that the specification describe how to make and how to use the invention being claimed. The Supreme Court decision *Mineral Separation v. Hyde*, 242 U.S. 261, 270 (1916) set forth the test for enablement as: "is the experimentation needed to practice the invention undue or unreasonable?" *In re Wands*, 858 F.2d 731, 737, 8 U.S.P.Q.2d 1400, 1404 (Fed. Cir. 1988) confirms this is still the standard. See also MPEP § 2164.01. In this instance, it is not clear that any experimentation, much less undue experimentation would be required. As identified in MPEP § 2164.01(a), the undue experimentation factors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) the breadth of the claims;
- (b) the nature of the invention;
- (c) the state of the prior art;
- (d) the level of one of ordinary skill in the art;
- (e) the level of predictability in the art;
- (f) the amount of direction provided by the inventor;
- (g) the existence of working examples; and
- (h) the quality of experimentation used to make or use the invention based on the content of the disclosure.

None of these factors have been addressed by the Examiner in connection with undue experimentation. Insofar as the initial burden rests on the Examiner to provide reasons for lack of enablement, and the Examiner has provided no explanation regarding any of these factors, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection cannot stand, as the record does not

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establish a *prima facie* case of lack of enablement. *In re Wright*, 999 F.2d 1557, 1562, 27 USPQ2d 1510, 1513 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

As noted in MPEP § 2164.01(a), a conclusion of lack of enablement means that, based on the evidence regarding each of the above factors of the specification, at the time the application was filed, the specification would not have taught one skilled in the art how to make and/or use the full scope of the claimed invention without undue experimentation. It is not evident that any experimentation need be done to carry out the claimed subject matter, let alone undue experimentation. As such, the rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Further to the arguments set forth above, responsive to the Examiner's questioning of how the claimed invention works, Appellants have explained how VBB is generated in the Amendment After Final filed May 30, 2006 that appears to not have been entered by the Examiner.

In the specification, the description of how the presently claimed invention operates in generating VBB (i.e., V_{BB}) in reference to the first power supply voltage VDD (i.e., V_{DD}) and second power supply voltage VSS (i.e., V_{SS}) is provided. For example, beginning on page 11, line 8, the description of how the operation of the substrate voltage generating circuit according to a first embodiment, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, is discussed. In another example, starting on page 18, line 13, the description of how the presently claimed invention according to a second embodiment, as shown in Figs. 1 and 3, is discussed.

As shown in Fig. 1, for example, the potential level inputs and outputs of each component are clearly shown. For example, NAND 1 can have either VDD or VSS as an output voltage level, output out.101 of level shift circuit 101 can have either VDD or VBB as an output voltage level, and so on. Hence, the behavior of each element in response to a certain input is clearly shown from the input signal OSC, /OSC and pump, power supply input VDD and VSS, to the final output signal OUT.vbb with substrate voltage VBB (i.e., V_{BB}).

Appellants note that the output substrate voltage VBB generated is also used as an input to the source of the 5th and 6th transistors N3 and N4, respectively, in Fig. 2. Also, VBB is used as an input voltage at the source of the 5th and 6th transistors N33 and N34, respectively, as shown in Fig. 3. This feedback of the generated VBB substrate voltage,

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although not explicitly described in the specification, is clearly shown in Fig. 1 with a connection of OUT.vbb to level shift circuits 101 and 102.

Further, VBB at OUT.vbb is generated by making the voltage of capacitor C1 or C2 descend from VSS. Additionally, SW1 and SW2 are switched on alternately. Thus, pulled down voltage VBB is applied to the output node OUT.vbb before the voltage at the output node becoming VSS.

In other words, with respect to the Examiner's assertion that VBB is VSS at the output node OUT.vbb because n1 and n2 are directly coupled to VSS, Appellants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that c1 at node n1 and c2 at node n2, as well as VSS, affect voltage VBB at the output node OUT.vbb. Hence, it would be erroneous to conclude that VBB is VSS at the output node OUT.vbb because n1 and n2 are directly coupled to VSS as contended by the Examiner.

In response to the Examiner's assertion that the use of "substrate voltage generating circuit" in the preamble of claim 1 does not accurately identify the circuit being described in the claim, Appellants respectfully submit that claims 1-6 are of varying scopes, with claim 1 being the broadest. That is, claims 1-6 are directed to the broadest invention of a substrate voltage generating circuit, with claims 2 and 3 further narrowing the scope by further reciting the details of the level shift circuit of claim 1. Hence, the language in the preamble of claim 1 is proper.

In addition to the arguments set forth above, Appellants respectfully submit that the presently claimed invention is directed to a substrate generating circuit having a level shift circuit and providing a third potential (VBB) level at an output node, as recited in claim 1 which is the broadest claim in the group of claims 1-6. The claimed invention is further narrowed in scope by the additional recital of the structural and functional details of the level shift circuit in dependent claims 2-6, for example.

Cases have held that "if a claim adequately defines patentable subject matter and meets the disclosure and clarity standards of Section 112, then it is proper, even though it may encompass less than what the invention could claim." *Andrew Corp. v. Gabriel Electronics, Inc.* (Fed. Cir. 1988). Further, Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner to MPEP §2164.08 (page 2100-191, Rev. 1, Feb. 2003). It is stated therein that when analyzing the enabled scope of a claim, the teaching in the specification must not be ignored because claims are to

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be given their broadest reasonable interpretation that is consistent with the specification, and that claims are interpreted in light of the specification does not mean that everything in the specification must be read into the claims. Moreover, according to MPEP 608.01(m), claims should be arranged in order of scope so that the first claim presented is the least restrictive. Keeping in mind of the guideline from the MPEP and legal precedents noted above, Applicants note that claims 1-6 are of varying scope, as Applicants' are entitled to claiming, and that independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-6 do not stand or fall together.

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's perception of lack of clarity as alleged in the Office Action is not pertinent to a finding of undue or unreasonable experimentation, which is the test of enablement.

For at least these reasons, the rejection under Section 112, first paragraph should be reversed.

B. Claims 1-10 Recite Definite Subject Matter

In the rejection, the Examiner again alleges that there is a lack of clarity as to how the "output node having a third potential level lower than the second potential level" actually relates to the output node being connected to the second power supply node, which is supplied with the "second potential level". Further, the Examiner contends that Appellants' use of "an input signal having the first and second potential levels" in claim 1 (line 8), and the use of "the input signal" in claim 2 (lines 3-6) are confusing. Still further, the Examiner contends that claim 1 appears to imply that the single output signal alternates between the first and second potential levels, and that in claim 2 the same single input signal is applied to the gate of the first through fourth transistors. The Examiner cited Appellants' own Fig. 2 and its associated disclosure that shows the first/second transistor P1/P2 receive complementary input signals, which are not the same "input signal" as claim 2 implies. The Examiner further states that claim 3 has the same type of problem as claim 2, wherein the first/second transistor do not receive the same "input signal" as the limitations on lines 3-6 imply. Finally, the Examiner contends that both independent claims 7 and 9 have the same "input signal" related problems as claims 2 and 3. That is, the Examiner contends that the first/second transistors do not both actually receive the same "input signal" as lines 2-5 of each of claims 7 and 9 imply.

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In response to the rejection, Appellants note that the Examiner appears to assume again that the output node would be at the second voltage potential (i.e., VSS) and not at the third voltage potential (i.e., VBB) when SW1 or SW2 are switched on. As noted above, this assumption is not accurate, as SW1 and SW2 switch on alternately and cooperate via feedback with the rest of the level shifting circuits to produce VBB and not VSS.

With respect to the Examiner's confusion between "an input signal having the first and second potential levels" in claim 1 and the use of "the input signal" in claim 2, Appellants note that the features of claim 2 are supported by Fig. 2. As explained in the previously submitted Amendment, the input signal having the first and second potential levels correspond to VDD and VSS, respectively. In Fig. 1, the input signal are inputted into in.101 of first transistor P1 and /in.101 of second transistor P2. The input signal may take a potential level of H or L (i.e., VDD or VSS, respectively). That is, the input signal to the first transistor P1 is complementary to the input signal transistor P2 as shown in Fig. 2, and the input signal to level shift circuit 101 shown in Fig. 1 are from the output of NAND1 is shown as DSS/VSS and INV 7 as VDD/VSS. Hence, there is no confusion between "an input signal having the first and second potential levels" in claim 1 and the use of "the input signal" in claim 2 as alleged by the Examiner.

With respect to the Examiner's allegation that claim 3 has the same problem as claim 2, Appellants note that the features of claim 3 are supported by Fig. 3, for example. Appellants' clarification of the claim language in claim 2 above and the response to the §112, 2nd paragraph rejection in the Amendment filed September 12, 2005 are also applicable to claim 3. The language "the input signal" directed to the first transistor and the second transistor in claim 3 means that the input signal to the first transistor P31 or to the second transistor P32 may be VDD or VSS (i.e., first and second potential levels, respectively). Due to the complementary nature of the input signal to the first transistor P31 and to second transistor P32, wherein the input signal's may be of VDD and VSS potential level (i.e., first potential level is High and second potential level is Low) as indicated in claim 1, the language "the input signal" in claim 3 is intended to cover the changing nature of the input signal and is deemed as sufficiently clear.

The explanations offered above in relation to the rejection of claims 2 and 3 are also applicable to the rejection of independent claims 7 and 9 and their respective dependent

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claims 8 and 10. Appellants note that independent claims 7 and 9 do not stand or fall together with their respective dependent claims 8 and 10.

As instructed in §2173.02 of the MPEP, definiteness of claim language must be analyzed, not in a vacuum, but in light of:

- (A) The content of the particular application disclosure;
- (B) The teachings of the prior art; and
- (C) The claim interpretation that would be given by one possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made.

As pointed out above, it is axiomatic that claims are not to be read in a vacuum, but rather in light of Appellants' disclosure and interpretation that would be given by one possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made. By the description in the specification and Appellants' explanations provided thus far, there is no lack of clarity in any of the claimed features.

For at least these reasons, the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph should be reversed.

C. The Specification Does Not Contain Informalities

The abstract of the disclosure is still objected to because, like the title, the abstract is believed to be describing a substrate voltage generating circuit that is not clearly shown or disclosed, with respect to being able to generate voltage VBB. Further, the Examiner asserted that the output signal VBB cannot have a third potential while specifying that the output signal can have a first and a third potential, as disclosed in the abstract of the disclosure. Still further, the Examiner is not clear whether what is meant in the phrase "in response to the output signal VBB" on line 10 of the abstract. Still further, the specification stand objected to as the Examiner is unclear how substrate VBB is transferred to output node OUT.vbb as described on page 13, lines 14-17 of the specification, and where does VBB actually come from.

In response to the objection to the specification and abstract, Appellants respectfully note that the level shift circuit outputs VDD (i.e., a first potential) and VBB (i.e., third potential level), as shown in Fig. 1 with the level shift circuit 101 and 102. The output signal of the level shift circuits 101 and 102 is inverted and input into the gate of SW1 and SW2.

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OUT.vbb, however, outputs VBB. In this regard, Appellants respectfully assert that the specification as well as the abstract contains no unclear language as asserted by the Examiner.

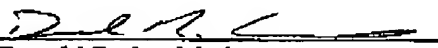
In the objection to the specification, the Examiner appears to also assume that OUT.vbb would be pulled down to VSS (ground) and stays at the ground potential. However, this assumption requires that SW1 or SW2 be switched on and stay on for a period of time until a steady state of 0V is reached at OUT.vbb. Appellants respectfully assert that this assumption is not accurate, as SW1 and SW2 switch on alternately and cooperate via feedback with the rest of the level shifting circuits to produce VBB and not VSS.

VIII. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Appellants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 1-6 and claims 1-10 under Section 112, 1st and 2nd paragraphs, respectively, and the objection to the specification are unsubstantiated, and thus unsustainable. Accordingly, the rejections are respectfully requested to be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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AUG 29 2006**VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX**

1. (Previously Amended) A substrate voltage generating circuit comprising:
a first power supply node supplied with a first potential level;
a second power supply node supplied with a second potential level lower than the first potential level;
an output node having a third potential level lower than the second potential level;
a level shift circuit which is coupled between the first power supply node and the output node, which receives an input signal having the first and second potential levels, and which outputs an output signal having the first potential level and the third potential level;
and
a switch circuit which connects the second power supply node to the output node in response to the output signal.
2. (Original) The substrate voltage generating circuit according to claim 1, wherein the level shift circuit comprises:
a first transistor of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain;
a second transistor of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain coupled to the switch circuit;
a third transistor of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;
a fourth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

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a fifth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thinner than the first thickness; and

a sixth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

3. (Previously Amended) The substrate voltage generating circuit according to claim 1, wherein the level shift circuit comprises:

a first transistor of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain;

a second transistor of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first power supply node, and a drain coupled to the switch circuit;

a third transistor of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness; a fourth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

a fifth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thicker than the first thickness; and

a sixth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source connected to the output node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

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4. (Original) The substrate voltage generating circuit according to claim 1, wherein the switch circuit comprises:

a switching element which has a control electrode receiving the output signal, a first electrode connected to the second power supply node, and a second electrode connected to the output node; and

a capacitor coupled between the first electrode and the control electrode.

5. (Original) The substrate voltage generating circuit according to claim 1, wherein the second potential level is 0 volt.

6. (Original) The substrate voltage generating circuit according to claim 1, wherein the third potential level is a negative voltage level.

7. (Original) A voltage level shifting circuit comprising:

a first transistor of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving an input signal, a source connected to a first supply node supplied with a first potential level, and a drain;

a second transistor of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first supply node, and a drain coupled to an output node;

a third transistor of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;

a fourth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;

a fifth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source connected to a second supply node supplied with a second potential level lower than the first potential level, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness thinner than the first thickness; and

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a sixth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source connected to the second supply node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

8. (Previously Amended) The voltage level shifting circuit according to claim 7, wherein the first potential level is a positive voltage level and the second potential level is a negative voltage level.

9. (Previously Amended) A voltage level shifting circuit comprising:
a first transistor of a first conductivity type which has a gate receiving an input signal, a source connected to a first supply node supplied with a first potential level, and a drain;
a second transistor of the first conductivity type which has a gate receiving the input signal, a source connected to the first supply node, and a drain coupled to an output node;
a third transistor of a second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the second transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the first transistor, and a gate oxide film having a first thickness;
a fourth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the drain of the first transistor, a source, a drain connected to the drain of the second transistor, and a gate oxide film having the first thickness;
a fifth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the first transistor, a source connected to a second supply node supplied with a second potential level lower than the first potential level, a drain connected to the source of the third transistor, and a gate oxide film having a second thickness ~~thinner~~ thicker than the first thickness; and
a sixth transistor of the second conductivity type which has a gate connected to the gate of the second transistor, a source connected to the second supply node, a drain connected to the source of the fourth transistor, and a gate oxide film having the second thickness.

10. (Previously Amended) The voltage level shifting circuit according to claim 9, wherein the first potential level is a positive voltage level and the second potential level is a negative voltage level.

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EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There are no related evidence to submit at this time.

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RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There are no related proceedings to this Appeal.

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